

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"INVESTING IN GOD'S KINGDOM" | LUKE 12:13-34 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is something you own you should probably get rid of but you never will?

"Guard Against Greed" (Luke 12: 13-15)

Jesus warns the people to guard their hearts against greed and covetousness. **What goes on in our culture and society that makes it easy to be greedy and unsatisfied?**

"The Parable of the Rich Fool" (Luke 12: 16-21)

Jesus shares a parable about a rich man who stored up wealth but ignored God. **How can people recognize when they have misplaced priorities on possessions?**

"Do Not Be Anxious" (Luke 12: 22-31)

Jesus warns people to not be anxious, showing them that their worry comes from a lack of trust in God and wanting control. **What are ways that God has shown He can be trusted to provide?**

"Our Life Follows Our Treasure" (Luke 12: 32-34)

Jesus encourages the people to give and be generous and seek to store our treasure in heaven. **What are signs that someone's attitude toward wealth is healthy and pleasing to God?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus says where we put our treasure is where we put our heart. We give our hearts to what we value and give us worth. We give our hearts to many things that easily make us feel good, but that feeling doesn't last long, and we become greedy and/or anxious. **Have you been struggling with greed and dissatisfaction with life? Have you been worrying over how to get things? Ask God to help you be generous and to trust His definition of success.**

Investing in God's Kingdom

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-6 AP: Missions Prayer. Employment. CK. Women's Xms. A21.
- B. Slide7 BrookeMarler: Middle East. What are you planning on doing? Help Finances. Evie.

II. Slide8 **Intro: Investing in God's Kingdom**

A. Today we don't build bigger barns, we just *rent more storage space*. Self-storage is an interesting concept: *humans pay to store their items to make space for more items*. It can make you ask: Why do we have so much stuff? Why can't we let these tangible items go? Sell them? Or recycle them?

1. Self-storage industry statistics show that every **11th** American uses the conveniences of self-storage. The annual revenue in this business is around **\$38 billion**. Nearly **9%** of U.S. households are currently renting a storage unit. Now, some use it for *relocating or downsizing*, but a large percentage is to simply *store extra stuff*.

B. Did you know: 1) Jesus had more to say about material possessions than any other subject. 2) Approx ½ of the parables deal with possessions. 3) 1 out of 6 verses in Mt, Mrk, & Lk discuss *right handling of material goods*.

1. Jesus emphasizes the principle of **INVESTMENT**, esp where to invest!

III. Slide9 **GUARD AGAINST GREED (13-15) READ covetousness**

A. Some family feuds are legendary, like the *Hatfields & McCoys*. And some *changed the landscape of a city* ... Did you know Adidas and Puma were started by 2 German brothers, *Rudolf & Adolf Dassler*? They founded a shoe company, rented a factory in their hometown, & were in business together for about 30 years. But when tension arose between their wives & in their business practices, they split the business. So Rudolf moved across the *Aurach River* and started his own factory.

1. Slide10 **Adolf** started a new company using his nickname (Adi) and the first 3 letters of his last name (Das) to establish **Adi-das**.

2. **Rudolf** created a new firm that he called **Ruda**, from "Ru" in Rudolf and "Da" in Dassler. *A few months later, changed its name to **Puma**.*
 3. The town of was divided on the issue, leading to the nickname, *the town of bent necks*, (people *looked down* to see which shoes strangers wore). *Now they all look good in their fresh kicks but **it split a town**. Literally it split down the middle by that river!*
- B. So back to *our brother in the story*, *Jesus this is great teaching & all, but help me, my brother is messing w/my money!* (how *greedy* to interrupt Jesus' teaching because he wanted more \$)
1. This brother cries **Justice**, but **Jesus** hears *the real cry from his heart, Covetousness*. (mayb his claim was rt, but we know *the sp* was wrong)
- C. Then **read** vs.14 (Jesus response). Jesus says, *No thanks, I didn't come to deal with material substance and possessions in that way*. Jesus rejects the role of arbitrator, in order to probe the **attitude**, the **moral issue** motivating him.
- D. Jesus, always looking for a teachable moment, offers this man *a deeper answer to his shallow question*. *Let's deal w/your covetousness*.
1. **Covetousness** comes in many forms, but there are **2 main ones**: *holding too tightly with what is already possessed. And grasping for more.*
 2. It started in the garden, *man had all the trees, God had one. And man wasn't content until he had that one also!*
 - a) So Jesus says, *you're drinking salt water here, you're never going to have your thirst quenched.*

IV. Slide11 **THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL (16-21) READ** (unique to Luke)

- A. (18,19) This man forgets that in agriculture it is a **gift** to have a bumper crop, *instead* he sings a doxology *to himself*.
- B. There are **4 kinds** of people in the Bible: *The righteous rich. The unrighteous rich. The righteous poor. And the unrighteous poor.*

1. This isn't a story that *God doesn't like rich people*. **No!** Boaz in the book of Ruth was a very **righteous**, and a very **generous**, rich man.
 2. There is no Ruth **success story**, w/o Boaz' **generosity story** (Boaz wasn't a legalist *in his giving*, he went *above & beyond* what the law required of him).
- C. **Slide12a** (21) **Not rich toward God** - see getting earthly things alone is **wanting *too little*** out of life.
- D. **Slide12b** Jesus' question is really this ... **Do you have Soul Wealth?**
1. It's like the rancher who was boasting to a friend, if you look in that direction as far as the eye can see **those are all my cattle**. If you look in this direction **all those oil wells** those are mine. You look east **that's all my grain**, and west **all that beautiful forest is all mine**. To which the friend replied while pointing to heaven, **How much do you have in that direction?**
 2. **If you won \$10,000** today how would you spend it? **How much do you have in that direction?** *Many people have learned how to **make money** but never learned how to **spend it**.*
- E. **Slide12c No Problem:** Jesus doesn't criticize him for ***being rich*** (he gained it honestly. good piece of ground. farmed it well. *He did not gain his goods wrongly, sin came after the gain*). Jesus doesn't criticize him **for saving** (Joseph saved everyone in Egypt by saving. *It's not a **sin** to have, only to hoard*). Jesus doesn't **criticize him for planning** (with prospect of a good harvest he wanted to plan for it. Still good, **but** it was *how he planned!*).
- F. **Slide12d The Problems:** He had a **my** problem: ***my crops, my barns, my grain, my goods, my soul***.
1. **Slide12e** He didn't recognize **God** as ***the real owner***. Deut.8:18 ***You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth.***
 2. When we ask, ***how much is one worth?*** we should be talking about one's **character & not one's possessions!**
 3. And like ***a crack of lightning*** God said to him, ***Fool!*** Because he left **GOD** out of his life.

4. We're reminded, **a ship should be in water, not water in the ship**. And so w/our possessions, **we should possess them, but not let them possess us**

G. The Rich man made 4 mistakes: 1) Thinking he was the **owner** of his stuff **when** he was just the **steward**. 2) He was worried about the **present** **and** forgot about **eternity**. 3) He was only concerned about the **physical** **and** forgot about the **spiritual**. 4) He treasured **stuff** **more than** people.

V. Slide13 **DO NOT BE ANXIOUS (22-31)** READ *anxious*

A. The parable (16-21), it seems, is directed toward **the rich**, whereas **this section** addresses **the impoverished**.

1. Material possessions can overcome the faith of **both** those who **have much** and those who **have little** - Both types of people need to **seek God** and **trust him with the outcome**.

B. Everyone has daily concerns about life, **but** Ray Pritchard said, *worry is excessive concern over the affairs of life*.

1. **It's a sin for 2 reasons:** 1) it **displaces** God in your life. 2) it **distracts** you from the things that really matter.

C. **So why are we Anxious?** (22,25,26). Because, so often we **don't trust** God.

1. We think God's going to **rip us off**. We don't think **He is** who He says He is. That He doesn't have **good plans** for us. That He doesn't want to **bless** us. Really we think, He's just trying to **make life hard for us**.

a) **So** we think if **we** take control of our lives, it can be better. **If** we take the reins, **we** can solve all of our problems and make the world a better place.

2. **But** actually, I need to submit myself to God's care, and trust Him as **my Father**.

D. Some older adoptive children coming into their new home often keep *the mother and father* at arms distance, often calling them by their first name, rather than **mom & dad**, which is fully understandable. It isn't a title that you just give anyone.

1. Is that your relationship with God? Is it more comfortable understanding him as *the man in the sky*, or treat him more like a Greek-god who you really don't trust because he can *fly off the handle* at any time.
 - a) So it's all about the parents displaying to their adoptive child they are **loved by God**, love by their *mom and dad*, and **in their forever family**.
2. See God knew that we needed a **Loving Father**.
 - a) **And** just like the 1st time an adoptive parent hears the child call them *mommy or daddy*, it so warms their heart, **so** with **our heavenly Father**.
 - b) **I hope you hear that today from your Heavenly Father**, that is **the great news of the gospel**, knowin you're **loved by the Father &** you are **in your forever family**.

E. (31) This is the upside down kingdom. (seek *His* kingdom 1st, not yours!)

- F. **Lessons:** So what *anxiety or fear* are you going to release to God today. **But** if you release something, you need to grab onto something else.
1. **How about throwing off what you have decided is success?** What if you threw off worrying about what people think of you? Are they gonna like me, are they gonna accept me? What if you flip it and just focus on caring for their soul.
 2. **What about throwing off the fear of financial security by giving generously?** Maybe by saying, *I'm not going to stress about holding onto everything, making sure that I have enough*. **Give**, to counteract holding onto everything.
 3. **What if you throw off your fear of being exposed for who you really are?** Your fears and shortcomings, and instead say, *I'm going to join an **Operation Unity Group*** (or later, a Men's, or women's, or a community group) **and see if CM is really like they say they are. See if I can really be real, and be offered grace in the context of community.**

G. God has an *incredible faith journey* for you, **but** it starts with **trust in God**.

VI. Slide 14 **OUR LIFE FOLLOWS OUR TREASURE (32-34)** READ *wrap up*

- A. Slide15 (32) little flock & Father & Kingdom = little flock (Shepherd) Father (Father) Kingdom (King). Thus, we are His lambs, His children, His subjects.
- B. Your *possessions on earth* are in contrast with your treasures in the heavens.
1. On earth, you can lose your finances. Your investments can fail, depreciate, and your valuables can be ruined.
 2. In Heaven, they are protected, they are secure, they're preserved forever. It is moth-proofed, rust-proofed, and is stored in a thief-proof vault.
- C. If life is first and foremost *spiritual*, then not what it has but what it IS counts!
- D. The heart is the *emotional barometer* of the value of the security of the treasure.
1. Having treasure is only precious if it produces happiness and joy in the heart. Treasure on earth often makes us anxious over it failing. Treasure in heaven is secure. *John Piper*
 2. Ok, so how do we get treasure in heaven? I know I can't take anything with me, how do I send it ahead? Sell & Give. Give it away. Be generous.
 - a) All the while remembering: you have the kingdom, & your Father loves to give you more and more of what you need (it's His *good pleasure*).
 - b) Jesus already told them, *give, and it will be given to you.* (how does this work?)
Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.
 Lk 6:38 (scoop)
 - (1) The picture here is of grain poured into a container. Pressed down & then shaken so that every little corner is filled. And then more grain poured in, until it runs over. LKGNT, pg.155.
- E. Here is where all hope lies, if today you recognize these distinctions and then make a change. Seek first the kingdom of God. "Your life follows your treasure."
- F. Slide16 We have a hummingbird feeder with 4 feeding stations. But every once in awhile one bird takes over the feeder as his property. He feeds and then sits in a nearby tree, rising to attack any other hummingbird that approaches his feeder.

1. He **wastes** hours **guarding** *his* feeder. *He is possessed by his possession.* His *freedom* of action is as *restricted* as if he were in a cage. He is caged by a situation he has created.
2. *If I could speak hummingbird I'd like to tell him ... Hey, It's my feeder. I fill it every week with red sweetness. The more you come back and drink from it, the more I will fill it for you. Let the others drink, actually invite them to come drink, and you will have even more.* That's hummingbird
Good News!

G.Keywords: fear, heaven, justice